DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 098 125 SO 007 913

AUTHOR Paranya, Ann C.
TITLE Unit on Aging.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Age; Bibliographies; Changing Attitudes; Class Activities; Course Evaluation; Course Objectives; Family Life Education; Marriage; Older Adults; Secondary Education; *Senior Citizens; *Social Problems; *Social Studies Units; *Sociology; Stereotypes; Student Attitudes; Student Evaluation; Teacher Evaluation; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This unit on aging was prepared for use in high school sociology, marriage and family classes. The objectives of the course, which can be taught in four classroom sessions, are to help students: (1) become aware of the fact that older people are individuals, differing widely in attitudes and abilities, who do not necessarily conform to the popular stereotype; (2) assess realistically the problems that older people face in the United States; (3) identify local agencies that serve the elderly and learn of the services that they offer; (4) become aware that as life expectancy increases, our society must make adequate provision for an increasing population of older citizens; and (5) develop a relationship with an older person or persons. Teaching strategies include class discussions, viewing of films, rap sessions with senior citizens, and panel discussions. The unit contains an outline of the course objectives, a unit outline describing classroom activities, and the positive results of the course evaluation by pupils, senior citizens, and teachers. A bibliography of books on aging is included. (Author/RM)

ED 098125

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

UNIT ON AGING

Prepared for use in Sociology and Marriage and Family classes taught by Mrs. Patricia Falconer at Lexington High School.

Ann G. Paranya
VISTA Volunteer
Services to the Elderly
Mystic Valley Mental Health
Center, Lexington, Massachusetts

SP 007 913

UNIT ON AGING

What is it like to be old? What are older persons like? What are some of the problems that accompany growing older in a modern, industrialized society? Why have so many people suddenly become involved in working with "elderly"? What are the stereotypes used in connection with older people? What are the realities?

This unit on Aging will acquaint you with some of the realities and with some of the problems which face older people. You will meet and talk with some Lexington "senior citizens", hear what the professionals say about the subject, and hear about some of the local agencies and facilities which work with older persons.

HIGH SCHOOL UNIT ON SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

1. To make students aware of the fact that older people are individuals, differing widely in attitudes and abilities, who do not necessarily conform to the popular stereotype.

2. To help students to assess realistically the problems that face older people in the United States.

3. To help students identify local agencies that serve the elderly and learn what services they offer.

4. To make students aware that as life expectancy increases, our society must make adequate provision for an increasing population of older citizens.

5. To encourage students to develop a relationship with an older person or persons.

SCHEDULE

Monday January 14	Tuesday January 15	Wednesday January 16	Thursday January 17	Friday January 18
A-Block 1 8:00-8:50 A.M. Marriage and Family (EWOW) 11 students Room B 23	A-Block 2 9:50-10:35 A.M.	A-Block 3 11:35-12:25 P.M.	A-Block 4 9:50-10:35 A.M.	
C Block 1 10:05-11:00 A.M. Socology (College) 24 students Room G 115	C Block 2 11:35-12:25 A.M.	C Block 3 1:30-2:25 P.M.		C Block 4 12:35-1:25
January 21 F Block 4 1:30-2:25 P.M.		F Block 1 8:00-8:50 A.M. Marriage and Family (General) 20 students Room G 117	F Block 2 12:45-1:35 P.M.	F Block 11:30-12:2

UNIT OUTLINE *** A and C BLOCKS

CLASS # 1

A. Preliminary exercise: "Write down at least 5 words or phrases that come to your mind when you think about old people. (5 min.)

B. Getting acquainted: Circle. Each person, including leader, identifies himself: Name, family members, grandparents, length of residency in town, interests, activities. (About 10 min.)

C. Rapping with adult leader about about what it is like to grow old: changes, feelings, fears, etc. (20 min.)

D. Preparation for meeting with senior citizens.
Exercise: Write some words or phrases using the hand you do not normally write with. (5 min.)
Discussion: How did you feel while you were writing? Tie in reactions with feelings of older people as their physical abilities slow down.

Class #2: Rapping with senior citizens.

A. Introductions: Circle - each person introduces himself briefly, mentioning a fact or two about himself.

B. Each senior citizen is paired with one, two, or three students to talk about life experiences, feelings, problems of aging, etc.

Pairings change once or twice during the period to allow students to talk with more than one senior, to get more than one point of view.

Class #3: The aging process and its implications.
A talk with question period. Speaker: Sr. Eileen Driscoll, Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Class #4: Local services for senior citizens. A panel discussion with question period.

A Block: Mr. William Melbye, Pres., Senior Citizens' Club
Asst. Treas. Lexington Housing Authority
Mrs. Judith Lane, Supervisor, Lexington Visiting Nurse Assn.
Mrs. Elizabeth Ward, Treas., Lexington Chapter, A.A.R.P.

C Block: Mr. Temple Scanlon, Executive Director, Lexington Housing Authority
Mrs. Theresa Hnatio, Lexington Visiting Nurse Association
Mrs. Julius Ritter, Pres. Lexington Chapter A.A.R.P.

UNIT OUTLINE *** F BLOCK

Class #1: Follow procedure as A and C Blocks

Class #2: The aging process and its implications.
A talk with question period.
Mrs. Sophie Levin, Psychiatric Social Worker, Case Aide Coordinator, Metropolitan State Hospital

Class #3: Films about problems of the elderly
Trigger films, prepared as a result of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. These short films form a basis for discussion about some of the problems faced by older people.

Class #4: Panel on local services as for A and C Blocks.
Mr. Temple Scanlon, Executive Director, Lexington Housing Authority
Mrs. Doris Henry, Lexington Visiting Nurse Association
Mr. Julius Ritter, V-pres. Lexington Chapter A.A.R.P.

Evaluation:
At the end of the four sessions, the students were given the papers containing the comments they had written down at the opening class and asked to write any reactions they had had to the unit, and particularly to record any way in which their ideas about, or attitudes toward older people had changed as a result of the four meetings.

EVALUATION ------UNIT ON AGING

PUPIL RESPONSES

Pupils' original responses about elderly people as reflected in Chart 1 showed that of the 172 responses, 123 were definately negative (items 1 & 2) and that 22 other responses (items 4,5,6) were related to negative aspects of aging.

Of the responses recorded at the end of the unit, 7 dealt with the unit itself, while the 9 responses claiming no change in attitude in most cases came from students who had recorded rather positive feelings at the beginning. Of the remaining 72 responses, 41 involved positive changes in attitude or new insights about older people. The remaining 31 responses dealt with more practical aspects of aging and programs for the elderly..

Pupils' comments indicated that they had found the contact with senior citizens interesting and valuable. When Mrs. Falconer's new classes met in the second semester, the students asked immediately if they would also have a unit on Aging. A very negative student representative to the Lexington School Committee reported the unit as an example of a "good thing" that had happened at the high school.

SENIORS' RESPONSES

All the seniors contacted except one (who could not climb stairs) readily agreed to participate, though some were slightly apprehensive. Afterward, they expressed pleasure at their experience and indicated that some of their attitudes about high school students had been changed in a positive way.

TEACHERS'EVALUATION

Mrs. Falconer and I felt that the unit went very well. The most successful section was the "rap session" with senior citizens, which was used in two of the three classes. In the third class we used films showing some of the problems of the aging and felt that they were not as effective.

Both speakers on gerontology were extremely effective and elicited many questions and comments from the students.

Both students and teachers felt that the major weakness in the unit was the very limited time for discussion and evaluation.

The following revisions have been made in plans for repeating the unit at the end of the spring semester;

Session 1. Introduction, initial responses to the elderly, showing of films on aging (outgrowth of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging) recording of reactions to the films.

Session 2. "Rap session" with senior citizens.

Session 3. Talk and discussion led by an expert in gerontology.

Session 4. Exploration of local resources for the elderly; oral and written evaluation.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

First Response - Ideas, Feelings about Old People

	A	C	F	Total
1. Responses involving physical deterioration: helplessness, slow-moving · senile · tired sick - nursing homes · outward signs: gray hair, wrinkles, poor sight, hearing-loss of memory, hypochondria, etc.	11	45	17	73
2. Responses involving negative reactions: bored, hopeless, depressed, lonely, boring, crabby, unhappy, resentful, abandoned, forgotten, cold, harsh, rejecting, impatient, prejudiced, reserved, rigid, secretive, insecure	8	18	24	50
3. Responses involving positive reactions: sweet, loving, wise, thoughtful, kind, nice, funny, fun, friendly, considerate of others, appreciating friendship, experienced, interesting, vacationing, aware, perceptive, thrilled with little things, concerned with young people.	9	5	14.	28
4. Responses involving attitudes (of the elderly) talk a lot, reminiscent, unexcitable, religious, worry about doing nothing	3	2	2	7
5. Responses involving financial problems: social security, retirement - no job, poor, economic problems		8	2	10
6. Responses involving loss, death · Widowhood, loss of friends, death-centered, worry about death	1	3	1	5
7. Miscellaneous responses: Senior Citizens clubs (3), grandchildren (2), watching TV (1) pleasingly plump grandmothers (1), brittle, small		6	3	9
Total	32	87	63	182

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Evaluation Responses	A Block	C Block	F Block	Totals
Responses reflecting change in ideas, opinions:				
a. Ideas have changed	1	3		4
b. Communication between old + young possible; not hard	1			1
c. Enjoy older people more than before	1			1
d. Feel happier at thought of growing older	1	1		2
e. Never used to think of elderly as useful citizens		1		1
	4	5		9
Responses indicating new insights about the elderly				
a. Older people are very capable	1	2	1	4
b. Older people are interesting to talk to	3		1	4
c. Older people are not bored, gloomy	1	1		2
d. Older people may be interested in same things as the young	1			1
e. Older people still want and need to be useful	2	3		5
f. Older people are concerned about helping each other	2			2
g. See elderly as "people" too	1			1
h. Older people anxious and willing to change things in their lives	1	2	1	4
i. Older people are living <u>now</u>, not in the past	1	3		4
j. Older people have energy, get involved		2		2
k. Stereotype applies to only a minority of elderly		1		1
l. Individual grows old on the outside, but not necessarily on the inside		1		1
m. Older people can live with the reality of aging			1	1
	13	15	4	32
3. Responses reflecting practical considerations				
a. Learned more about what is going on	3	3		6
b. Hope more elderly get involved	1			1
c. Hope more people who care get involved	1			1
d. Many programs for the elderly - helpful	1	7	4	12
e Programs need help, volunteers	1			1
f. Need to keep people in their homes as long as possible	1			1
g Elders need help sometimes; deserve it		1		1
	8	11	8	27

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Evaluation Responses (con't)	A Block	C Block	F Block	Total
Responses indicating no change, or little change				
a. Views not changed (already liberal)		1	4	5
b. Ideas clarified, reinforced, strengthened		2	2	4
		3	6	9
Miscellaneous responses				
a. Lots of depression, losses		1		1
b. Glad younger generation has the good wishes of the older		1		1
c. Older people don't have to be isolated - if they try			1	1
d. Learned some negative aspects of aging			1	1
		2	2	4
Responses dealing with the unit				
a. Not enough time for discussions	2			2
b. People-to-people learning more fun than book learning	1			1
c. Unit has been interesting, enjoyable	1	2		3
d. Information should be given to all students		1		1
	4	3		7
Total number of responses	29	39	20	88

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FIELD WORK: Report on hours

1. Planning ---------- 8 hours
2. Organizing materials, participants, etc. ---------- 4 hours
3. Preparing bibliography ---------- 6 hours
4. Teaching hours:
   Session One ---------- 12 hours
   Session Two ---------- 16 hours

Total 46 hours

FIELD WORK: Outcomes other than attitude changes

As a result of the positive reaction to the Unit on Aging, three other teachers at Lexington High School have invited senior citizens to participate in their classes to contribute their experiences during the Depression Era, and also to present their views to a class dealing with death and dying.

Another outcome of the unit is the opening up of summer jobs as homemakers for senior students. They will be trained by, and work through, North Metropolitan Homemakers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON AGING

* Books in Cary Library

* Barron, Milton L.: The Aging American - Introduction to social gerontology and geriatrics. Crowell, 1961

* Boas, Ernst Philip: Add Life to Your Years (with Norman F. Boas) New York. John Day Co., 1963

* Buckley, Mary: The Aged Are People Too

* Cabot, Natalie Harris: You Can't Count on Dying -Non-medical study of the aging process. Houghton, 1961

* Cooley, Leland F. & Cooley, Lee M.: The Retirement Trap. Garden City. N.Y., Doubleday, 1965

* Curtin, Sharon R.: Nobody Ever Died of Old Age. Boston, Little, Brown & Company, 1972

* De Ropp, Robert S.: Man against Aging. Biological, clinical, social problems of aging. St. Martin's Press, 1960

* Garvin, Richard M. & Burger, Richard E.: Where They Go to Die: the tragedy of America's aged New York, Delacorte Press, 1968

* Greene, Eva, comp.: The Chance of a Lifetime -an anthology Freeport, Me., Bond Wheelwight, 1968

* Hart, Gifford R.: Retirement: a New Outlook for the Individual. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969

* Hewitt, Edward Ringwood: Days from Seventy-five to Ninety. (Auto-biogrpahy - the challenge of old age) Duell, 1957

* Lang, Gladys Engel, ed.: Old Age in America - readings about pro-lems of old age. Wilson, H.W., 1961

* Lowenthal, Marjorie Fiske: Lives in Distress: the paths of the elderly to the psychiatric ward. New York, Basic Books, 1964

* Peck, Joseph H.: Let's Rejoin the Human Race. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice - Hall, 1963

* Rabinowitz, Dorothy & Nielson, Yedidd: Home Life: a story of old age. New York, Macmillan, 1971

* Scott-Maxwell, Florida Pier: The Measure of My Days .. Knopf, 1968

* Stern, Edith (Mendel) with Mabel Ross: You and Your Aging Parents. Harper & Row

* Taylor, Florence Marian (Tompkins): The Autum Years: insights and reflections. New York, Seabury Press, 1968

* Townsend, Claire, project director: Old Age: the Last Segregation (Ralph Nader study group report on nursing homes) New York, Grossman Publishers, 1971

* United States Commission on Labor and Public Welfare: Aged and Aging in the United States: a National Problem

* Van Welde, Jacoba: The Big Ward. New York, Simon & Shuster, 1960

From Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Every 10th American, the program of the Administration on Aging, 1970
20 pp. il. 20¢ Catalog # H.E. 17.302:P 94

Facts on Aging. 1970 12 pp. il. 30¢ Catalog # H.E. 17.309/a:Fi19

Working with older people, a guide to practice:
Vol. II. Biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of aging.
1970. 51pp. 65¢ Catalog #HE20.2558:0[illegible]1/v.2

Vol.III Aging person, needs and services. 1970. 90 pp. $1.00
Catalog #HD 20.2558:0[illegible]1/v.3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Notes on Senior Participants

The seniors who participated in the unit on aging were personal friends or acquaintances, or people I had met at meetings or courses dealing with problems of the elderly. One or two were recently retired, in their early sixties; most of the participants were in their seventies.

Personalities varied, and in the group was one person who was just coming out of a depression, one with a rather negative personality, several very forceful, outgoing types. Curiously, the students did not pick up these differences. Perhaps the shortness of time, or the stimulation of talking to attentive, receptive listeners made the seniors seem more alike.

Judging from their evaluation comments, the students had very positive reactions to the seniors.

Ideally, I would like them to get a broader view - to see that some older people are rigid, withdrawn, unhappy. However, a good many of the students have had other contacts: with nursing home patients, with rigid or complaining grandparents, so perhaps it is most important for them to get a positive view of age through this unit.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mystic Valley Mental Health Center
186 Bedford Street
Lexington, Massachusetts 02173

January 8, 1974

Dear_____,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our high school program on social gerontology. One aim of this unit is to help young people to see that older people are individuals with differing ideas and different life-styles, and that they do not all fit the stereotype of the poor, isolated, physically handicapped person whose only recourse is to a dreary nursing home. On the other hand, we do want them to understand that aging does produce problems -- physical, economic, social, and spiritual -- with which older people - and society - must cope, and which they, too, will also face eventually.

It is in this area that you can help: by talking frankly with these young people about your lives - what you have done, where you have lived and traveled, what problems you have faced, or expect to face, how you feel about things. Do be straightforward and honest with them. However, if you feel that a question is inappropriate or too personal, reserve the right not to answer.

We shall meet at the high school on Tuesday morning, January 15, at 9:40 A.M. in B Unit, which runs parallel to Park Drive. You will probably find Park Drive the easiest place to park.

The first class begins at 9:50 A.M. and will last about 45 minutes. The second class begins at about 11:25 A.M. and runs until 12:25 P.M. During the time between classes there will be refreshments and an opportunity to see something of the high school activities or to talk informally with some of the students who are not in the sociology classes.

If you have any questions, or need transportation to the high school, please call me at 861-0890 during the day or at 861-7628 in the evening.

Sincerely yours,

Ann G. Paranya
VISTA Volunteer
Mystic Valley Mental Health Center

AGP:mg